

No two people recover from a spinal problem in the same way or at the same rate. Last week I wrote about how the spine is constructed to help you understand how the spine gets damaged and how it heals.

The ligaments of the spine essentially hold it together. When the spine is subjected to excessive force as would happen in a car accident, some of the ligament fibers are torn. The severity of the injury is directly related to how many ligament fibers are damaged. Muscle fibers will also be torn in these types of injuries. Muscle fibers, however, are much more flexible than ligament fibers and so they are often less injured than the ligaments.

Accidents are not the only ways that the spine is damaged. Most of the time, spinal damage is a gradual process. The spine is used in nearly every activity, even sleeping. Repetitive activities, given enough time, can be more damaging than sudden, traumatic injuries. Bending, twisting, lifting, poor posture, sleeping positions all stress the spine. When spinal muscles are not conditioned properly, they do not support the spine as much as they should. The ligaments then have to do the job.

When tissues are damaged, the body begins the repair processes. Muscles heal better than ligaments, since muscles have a much richer blood supply. Substances from the blood are needed to repair damage. Since ligaments don't have a rich blood supply, these substances can't get to the ligaments as easily.

Many activities that we do involving the spine are done on a daily basis. Since the ligaments heal slowly, they may be damaged repeatedly while they are healing. This not only slows the healing process, but it promotes poor healing. Poor healing typically involves the accumulation of scar tissue.

Next week I will talk about scar tissue and how it can cause long term problems. To read my previous articles visit lifetouchclinics.com.